

# FEARLESS MEN



By VARIOUS AUTHORS

Dramatizations from the  
Prophets



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11



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Prophets

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This series was prepared to accompany "Men Unafraid" by Rollin H. Walker. These dramatizations were written by students in Professor Walker's class in Bible at Ohio Wesleyan University, and the valuable contribution he has made is hereby gratefully acknowledged. Arrangement for their publication was made in co-operation with the Board of Epworth League.

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## PRODUCTION NOTES

The dramatizations in this volume can be given either a simple or an elaborate production. It is assumed that they will be presented oftenest as a part of a Sunday evening service, on the platform of an assembly-room, or else out-doors. Consequently, the two latter types of production are referred to in the following suggestions. (If, in some cases, an elaborate realistic setting is desired, it is assumed that the director will seek the advice of someone with experience and artistic ability.)

### BACKGROUND

For the usual platform in Church or Parish House, a setting which can be adapted to any of these plays is a background of blue-gray sateen curtains, with another pair hung at each side in front to form wings. Entrances can be made between these and the back curtains, or can easily be arranged at any desired point in the background by ripping up a seam in the curtain part-way. In this case there should be another curtain back of the opening. This would be especially necessary in the first scene of "Amos," where the gray curtains should be parted eight feet at center. Here the curtain seen through the opening should be blue, to suggest the sky. One or two palms cut from green cambric and hung against the blue curtain, the size being in proportion to the distance it is intended to represent, will add to the effect.

### LIGHTING

Variety in the scenes may be easily gained by changes in lighting effects instead of by the cumbersome method of shifting scenery. For instance, the second scene of Act I of "Jeremiah" may very well be treated as a sunset scene, opening in a yellow light, then changing to orange, to rose, to violet, and lastly to blue. This can be done by using gelatine slides of different colors in a stereopticon lantern and, on the blue-gray background, is surprisingly effective.

In general, it is better to use one (or, if possible two) stereopticon lanterns for the lighting of the stage, rather than footlights. If the lanterns can be equipped with rheostats, so that the lights can be made to come and go off gradually, the effect is much better.

In several cases, alternative endings have been suggested for use when there is no front curtain to conceal the stage. For day-time out-door productions, it is of course necessary to get the players off the stage gracefully and naturally, since nothing so completely

shatters the dramatic illusion of a scene as to have the characters drop out of their parts at the end of the dialogue in order to get off the stage. They must be playing their parts up to the last instant they are visible to the audience. In in-door productions at night, this difficulty can generally be overcome by turning out all the lights for a moment, at the end of a scene, as soon as the last word is spoken, and allowing the players to leave the stage in the darkness. (This manœuvre should be carefully rehearsed, to avoid accidents and unnecessary noises during the exit.)

The fire suggested in the Epilogue of "Jeremiah" may be a real bonfire in the case of an out-door production. On an in-door stage this can be simulated by two or three electric light bulbs covered with red and yellow crepe-paper and concealed under some sticks and leaves. The bulbs can be turned on one after the other, to suggest the gradual kindling of the fire.

## COSTUMES

The general types of Hebrew costumes did not differ greatly during the period from Abraham through the Early Church. Therefore a few definite suggestions for the construction of garments will afford sufficient basis, with a little variation to indicate character interpretation, etc., for the preparation of costumes for this series of dramatizations.

The foundation garment for almost any character, man or woman, can be a straight tunic with or without sleeves. One width of material twice the length of the garment is sufficient. The sides are sewed up, leaving a twelve-inch opening for the arms and an opening is cut for the head. The sleeves of the women's tunics are long and pointed. This long tunic, in plain or narrow-striped material, is used everywhere, except for soldiers, shepherds, servants and children. These wear a short-sleeved tunic, reaching only to the knees.

Over the tunic is sometimes worn the wide abba. Two breadths of material, twice the length of the person, are required for this. The two parts are sewed together for about half their length, the rest left for the front opening, the seam being in the middle of the back. The sides are then sewed together, leaving a fifteen-inch opening for the arms. The width of the abba gives the impression of sleeves. This may be plain, but more often should be in broad or narrow stripes, using two colors. The shepherds wore a wool abba in broad black and white stripes. Those worn by the noblemen should be highly decorated to denote wealth, the decorations usually being an



embroidered border in a geometric design down the front or fringe around the bottom and sleeves.

The sashes and headdresses are usually in contrast to the rest of the costume, being bright in color and sometimes of striped material. The sash is broad and long enough to reach comfortably around the waist, leaving no ends hanging. The headdress may be a turban, consisting of a small cap, about which folds of bright colored cloth are wound. This was generally worn by men of the cities. The men in the country wore a piece of cloth a yard square. This is draped over the head with the middle of one side at the forehead and the corners hanging at the sides and down the back and is held on the head by a twist of rope or cloth. Draped over the headdress, the priests sometimes wore a prayer blanket. This can be made of a piece of white material, one yard wide and two yards long, having strips of blue cloth sewed across the ends.

The veil worn by the women is made of rather substantial material, one yard wide and two or three yards long. This can be worn in a number of ways. It may be draped over the head with both ends hanging down the back—or one end may hang in the front while the other end crosses it in front and hangs over the shoulder to the back.

Sandals may be made from inner soles and tape. A hole should be bored in the sole and the tape brought up between the great toe and the next—or there should be a broad band across the toes. On those worn by the soldiers the tapes should lace up the legs to the knees.

The predominant colors are olive green, henna brown, tan and a faded-looking blue, although gray, yellow, orange, dark red, black and white and different shades of blue, brown and purple are also good. Madonna blue is a favorite for the women.

The difference in the characters can be shown by a careful selection of colors, materials and styles of garments. It would be well to dress the prophets plainly and in sober colors, as dark blue, dark brown or gray, with the exception of Jeremiah in Act I, Scene III, who wears a white robe at this time for a symbolic purpose, and Baruch in Act II, Scene II of Jeremiah. It is well to distinguish between the symbolic dress with which some painters clothe Hebrew people, and the authentic dress of the period. The costumes of the nobles and kings may be made of silk material in rich colors and highly decorated. A variety of gay and sober colors, but only cotton or wool materials and no decoration, should be used in the dress of the

common people. Some among them would not wear the abba. It is regarded as an outer garment, much as an overcoat. The soldiers would not wear it, but would carry spears and shields to denote their office.

The apostate Jews in "The Herald of the Restoration" would probably wear the Babylonian dress. The foundation for this is a short tunic, similar to those worn by the Hebrew soldiers and servants. Over this is worn a long, narrow, sleeveless gown which is open in front and has fringe around the bottom. On their heads they wear a cap, generally white, fitting the head like a skullcap, but being higher in the crown.

If anyone is wishing to do much with Biblical dramatizations, it is well to make the costumes of rather substantial materials, so building up a collection which will be valuable for future use. Crepe, muslin, and cotton poplin are good, when plain colors are used. Striped ticking and a number of striped drapery materials are useful. Silkolene and muslin make very good headdresses. Canton flannel can be used to imitate velvet.

## MUSIC

If it is possible to consult a Jewish Rabbi, some genuine ancient Hebrew music may be obtained for the chant of the worshippers in the second scene of "Amos"; for Rebekah's song at the beginning of Act I, Scene I of "Jeremiah"; for the chant at the end of "Jeremiah"; for the chant of the merchants in "The Herald of the Restoration" and to be played off-stage, between the scenes, to help in holding the audience in the mood of the presentation. In lieu of this, one piece that can be used in different places is the Hebrew melody known as "Leoni," found in the Methodist Hymnal with the words, "The God of Abraham Praise." (No. 4.)



# AMOS

A Dramatization in Two Scenes

By

Stephen H. Fritchman



# AMOS

## THE PEOPLE OF THE PLAY

First Speaker.

Second Speaker.

AMOS, A Shepherd of Tekoa.

ELMADAM, A Wealthy Garment Merchant.

COSAM, A Food Merchant, Friend to Elmadam.

AMAZIAH, A Priest in the Temple of Bethel.

JEROBOAM, King of Israel.

REHOB, HARIM, TERAH, Three of the King's Guards.

Servers, Citizens and Children.

TIME: The Latter Part of King Jeroboam's Reign, About 755 B. C.

PLACE: *Beth-el.*

## THE PROLOGUE

*If there is a front curtain the speakers stand before it at opposite ends of the platform; otherwise they stand at convenient places at each side of the proscenium opening.*

FIRST SPEAKER: Hear these words concerning the children of Israel in the days of King Jeroboam the Second.

In those days the wealthy owners of the land lived in idleness and ease in houses paneled in ivory. They did not earn their wealth, but wrested it from the poor who tilled their fields. The rich merchants defrauded the needy in the market places, and dealt unjustly with the toilers. The country was infested with the henchmen of these oppressors who made life a burden for the masses. Even the judges were men of greed who sought favor with the rich and cared nothing for justice. Yet these people pretended to be religious. On Sabbaths and on feast days they thronged the temples in Gilgal, Beer-Sheba and Beth-el. They celebrated new moons with vast solemn assemblies and poured the fruits of their greed upon the altars. Tithes and sacrifices tainted with the sweat and blood of ruined peasants filled to over-



flowing the coffers of the temple treasuries. And these people, unjust, greedy, wicked, esteemed themselves to be the chosen of Jehovah. So self-satisfied were they that they boasted saying, "Evil cannot attack or over-take us."

SECOND SPEAKER: In these days there came forth from the hills of Tekoa a herdsman whose name was Amos. He spoke the words of the Lord Jehovah with utter fearlessness. Within his heart there burned a passion of love for the poor and wrath against the oppressors. He faced the priests courageously, defied the judges, and spoke against the King himself. Fiercely he denounced the enslavement of the toiler and the selling of the poor for debt. He proclaimed that their vain sacrifices were an abomination to the Lord and uttered words of scorn against empty rites and foolish ceremonies. His words like lightning strokes flashed forth the message of the God eternal. With daring unselfishness he risked his very life for the sake of those whom he truly loved. His prophecy tells us that he was denounced by the high priest as a dangerous anarchist and was banished from the land. His words, however, must have appealed to the hearts of the people, for they preserved his message and we have his book as a precious heritage, the earliest Hebrew prophecy that has come down to us from the hands of its author.

The first scene is laid at the city gate of the great sanctuary at Beth-el, and its date is about 755 B. C. The characters are two friends, Elmadam, a wealthy garment merchant, and Cosam, a food merchant. Later Amos, the prophet of Jehovah, joins them.

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## SCENE I

PLACE: *Beth-el; at the City Gate.*

*We are looking out through the gate, which is eight or ten feet wide. Blue sky is seen beyond. People pass back and forth beyond the walls, which are of gray stone. There are several booths against the walls on either side of the gate.*

*Enter COSAM and ELMADAM, talking together.*

ELMADAM: Well done, Cosam; indeed thou art a clever man!  
(*They stand before Elmadam's booth handling the cloth as they talk.*)

COSAM: Thou art a flatterer, Elmadam, I fear. (*Laughs.*) But truly, Elmadam, between ourselves (*cautiously*), our King is a shrewd monarch. (*Winks.*) I told him all that you and I had spoken of. He answered well. (*Laughs.*) 'Twas easier than I did imagine. (*Slaps Elmadam on back and both laugh.*)

ELMADAM: What didst thou say to him?

COSAM: Indeed, thou knowest well as I what sums of money Jeroboam owes the merchants of this gate. He fears our threats as men do fear the plague. Of course, the law must stand, well know we that, but mark ye this—the King did promise on his oath that though the law doth stand, his officers would fail to see if we should trade upon the Sabbath Day.

ELMADAM: 'Tis well they have unseeing eyes. 'Tis well, indeed.

*(A poorly dressed citizen enters through the gate and approaches Cosam and is about to speak to him.)*

COSAM: Get thee gone, thou lazy fool. I know well who thou art, asking for bread. Pay thee first for last week's loaf. Then shalt thou get more. Thou wouldst have me think thy wife is ill. What care I for vain excuses and idle stories having naught of truth in them? Get thee hence.

*(Shouting and jeering is heard without. Amos enters through gate followed by citizens and children, who stand by the wall on opposite sides of the platform. They laugh and mock Amos while Elmadam speaks. Poorly dressed citizen goes to edge of crowd.)*

ELMADAM: Who cometh here? What impudent fellow is this that would hinder our trade?

CITIZEN (*stepping forward from crowd to center platform and speaking in a mocking tone*): 'Tis the herdsman from the hills that calleth himself a prophet from the Lord Jehovah.

ELMADAM (*to Amos, who is standing in the gateway*): Clear the gateway. This is no harbor for useless vagabonds. Away! (*shoves him backwards*). We have our work to do.

*(Amos steps forward to center platform. As he speaks the poorly dressed citizen moves out from the crowd to front where he gazes at Amos in absorption.)*



AMOS: Hear this, O ye that would swallow up the needy, and cause the poor of the land to fail, saying, "When will the new moon be gone; that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and dealing falsely with the balances of deceit; that we may buy the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes

*(Poorly dressed citizen looks accusingly at Cosam)*  
and sell the refuse of the wheat?" Jehovah hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will not forget any of their works.

COSAM *(to Elmadam)*: What knoweth this man of such things? He is but a shepherd from the hills.

AMOS *(fiercely)*: Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Israel, yea for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have sold the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes. They pant after the dust of the earth on the heads of the poor and they turn aside the way of the meek.

COSAM *(boastfully)*: That may well be true of some, but I pay my tithes each new moon according to the law. Amaziah, the high priest, will testify.

ELMADAM: Yea, truly, and I give my sacrifices every Sabbath. What meanest thou by talking thus to us? Impertinent fellow!

AMOS: Yea, but ye come to Bethel, and transgress; to Gilgal, and multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning and your tithes every three days; and offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving of that which is leavened, and proclaim free-will offerings and publish them; for this pleaseth you, O ye Children of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah.

*(Citizens look at Cosam and Elmadam who look uneasy.)*

For lo, He that formeth the mountains and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought; that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth—Jehovah, the God of hosts, is his name!

COSAM *(aside to Elmadam)*: Such prattle must be stopped else he will turn the common people against us. Look how they stand amazed! *(pointing to the crowd)*.

ELMADAM *(aside to Cosam)*: Verily, we must turn the crowd upon him! *(To the people standing about.)* Turn this babbling fellow from the gate. Know ye not that he is a false prophet? Let not



Amaziah see you listening thus! Away with such a fellow from the gate!

*(The people start to laugh, although some look frightened, and push Amos out through the gate.)*

## CURTAIN

NARRATOR: The second scene takes place on the Sabbath a few days after the first, at the temple porch in Beth-el. The characters are the King, Amaziah the priest, Amos, citizens and guards.

## SCENE II

PLACE: Beth-el. The Temple Porch.

*As the curtain rises, the organ is heard playing softly. Off-stage are heard the voices of the worshippers chanting. As the chant ends, the recessional files on to the porch, at right. First come two boys, servants of the priests; then two priests; then Amaziah, the High Priest; then two guards; then the King; then two more guards; then a double file of men and women.*

*The King remains on the porch, indicating by a gesture that he wishes to speak with Amaziah; who also remains. The guards stand at attention, two on each side against the Temple wall.*

*Cosam and Elmadam separate from the crowd and stand at left talking together for a moment. A man approaches Elmadam and speaks to him. Elmadam takes from the folds of his garment a silken scarf or headdress (piece of striped silk about one yard wide) displays it, and indicates the price by holding up five fingers. The customer holds up three; Elmadam shakes his head, but finally holds up four fingers.*

*One of the guards observes this bargaining and goes to Elmadam. He motions to him to put away the silk. Elmadam whispers to him, whereupon his eyes become "un-seeing" and he moves back to his former position.*

*During the above action, the crowd is dispersing with a general murmur of voices. The King and Amaziah are talking quietly. When they are alone on the porch, except for the guards, the King speaks so as to be heard by the audience.*

KING: What man was that you told me of who dareth to conspire against the King?

AMAZIAH: He calleth himself Amos. In the midst of Israel he continueth his prophecies against thee, O king. He trieth to stir up dissension amongst the populace and disfavor against thee. The land is not able to bear his words.

KING (*angrily*): Where is the wretch abiding now?

AMAZIAH: I know not. But this one thing I know. He teacheth men blasphemy against the temple, saying Jehovah careth naught for sacrifices and tithes. Thou knowest well such doctrine will destroy respect and order within these walls. The citizens that saw him on the street may tell thee where he lodgeth; I know not.

KING (*to guards*): Go, bring this man to Amaziah. Make haste.

*(Two of the guards go out, left.)*

*(To Amaziah, impatiently and angrily)*: Ambassadors await me at this hour within the palace walls. But I sent at once for this stirrer up of strife, lest he again disturb the rabble in the streets. Charge him to cease his babblings under pain of death. They say he is an obstinate fellow, so charge him strongly.

*(The King and the two remaining guards go out, right. Enter guards with Amos, bound. Citizens and children follow quietly for fear of Amaziah. Guards bring Amos to Amaziah.)*

AMAZIAH: Unloose this fellow's hands!

*(Guards untie his hands.)*

What hast thou to say, thou vagabond? Thou who stirrest up disturbance on the streets. What didst thou say this morning at my treasury?

AMOS (*in a loud firm voice*): Jeroboam shall die by the sword and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of his land.

AMAZIAH (*frightened, but trying unsuccessfully to hide his fear*): O thou Seer! Go, flee thou away into the land of Judah and there eat bread and prophesy there, but prophesy not again any more at Beth-el, for it is the King's sanctuary and it is a royal house.

*(Cosam and Elmadam nod approval.)*



AMOS (*quietly and kindly*) : I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son, but a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees ; and Jehovah took me from the flock, and Jehovah saith unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel. Now therefore hear thou the word of Jehovah. Thou sayest prophesy not against Israel (*with rising earnestness and enthusiasm*). Therefore, thus saith Jehovah, Thy wife shall be a harlot unto the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line, and thou, thyself, shalt die in a land that is unclean, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of his land.

CITIZEN (*to another citizen*) : He speaks as one having authority.

SECOND CITIZEN : Verily thou art right. He is a true prophet.

AMAZIAH : Dost thou dare to think the Lord hath spoken unto a herdsman from the hills like thyself?

AMOS : Surely the Lord will do nothing except he reveal his secret unto his servants, the prophets. The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord Jehovah hath spoken, who can but prophesy?

AMAZIAH (*secretly worried but speaking loudly*) : What meanest thou by such direful forebodings? Do we not give sacrifices unto God? Do we not keep the new moons and the appointed feasts? We keep the law!

AMOS : Thus saith the Lord, I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me burnt offerings, and meal offerings, I will not accept them ; neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of your songs ; for I will not hear the melody of your viols. But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

AMAZIAH (*wrathfully, stepping forward and striking Amos*) : Get thee gone, thou dog ! Cease thy prophecies lest the King take thy head.

AMOS : Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, That I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread nor of thirst for water, but of hearing of the words of Jehovah. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east ; and they shall run to and fro to seek the word of Jehovah, and shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and the young men faint for thirst. For the Lord Jehovah of hosts is he that toucheth



the land and it melteth and all that dwell therein shall mourn. It is he that buildeth his chambers in the heavens, and hath his vault upon the earth; Jehovah is his name.

## CURTAIN

*Alternate ending in case no front curtain is used:  
(Amaziah makes threatening gestures, goes out, right.  
Elmadam, Cosam and other merchants look after Amaziah  
and follow him; others in poorer raiment follow Amos, who  
goes out, left.)*

## EPILOGUE

FIRST SPEAKER: And so it came to pass even as the Prophet Amos had predicted, for there came forth from the North a mighty king. He caused the cities of Israel to be lowered to the dust and be as ashes. Samaria, the fair capital, was utterly destroyed and the inhabitants thereof were carried away captive to Assyria. And as the herdsman prophesied, the altars of Gilgal and Beth-el were but ruinous heaps. The summer houses of the rich were leveled to the earth. The vineyards and the fruit trees were cut down. Over the whole land settled the clouds of desolation. And it was so because the children of Israel had sinned against Jehovah their God.

SECOND SPEAKER: Thus it was shown by God that a nation built upon oppression of the poor and needy must perish. For it has always been that when men follow after covetousness and seek to stifle conscience by vain sacrifices, tithes and offerings, they are doomed of God to be destroyed. Great religious festivals and multitudinous sacrifices have never covered up injustice to the masses. In every age the fundamental moral laws of God must stand. And so we see that whenever any civilization casts aside the commandments of Jehovah, it is bound, by the very laws of the universe, to fall in destruction.

# HOSEA

A Dramatization in Two Scenes

By

Grace E. Middleton

# HOSEA

Time: 720 B. C.

Place: A City of Israel

## THE PEOPLE OF THE PLAY

HOSEA, The prophet; a studious, thoughtful man; kind and quiet, yet stern and courageous; fearless in speaking the truth as it is revealed to him.

JEZREEL, Hosea's son; an earnest youth who greatly admires his father; is reverent and polite, and very much interested in all that is going on.

LORUHAMA, Hosea's daughter; gentle and pleasant, and very fond of her father.

EZRA, A merchant, a friend of Hosea; admires and sympathizes with Hosea. Fully appreciative of the danger facing Israel.

ELASAH, a priest of the temple in which Hosea has been serving. A shallow thinker, fond of ceremony and ritual.

ZEBADIAH, a priest, much like Elasa; they are jealous of Hosea's power over the people and think he is foolishly concerned over the state of Israel.

MEREMOTH, a citizen who realizes Hosea is right, and gives him his open support.

NEBO, a friend of Meremoth, skeptical of the teachings of the new prophet.

HARIM, a citizen, good natured, ready to listen to any man who can hold the crowd.

PROLOCUTORS, one at either side of stage.

Characters without lines:

Jewelry peddler, lame; who sits at side of booth and listens curiously but attentively.

Fruit vender; stays to the side of stage or in background.

Citizens, who make up the group following Harim.



## PROLOGUE

PROLOCUTOR: In the middle of the eighth century before Christ the northern tribes of Israel had fallen into evil ways. Prosperity had begotten luxury and drunkenness, and drunkenness and luxury had led to immorality and debasement of the worship of Jehovah. The whole land, while ostensibly devoted to the true God, was honeycombed with heathenism. Anarchy and disorder prevailed. One king after another was assassinated, and the rising power of Assyria like a great storm cloud threatened the destruction of the Nation.

PROLOCUTOR (*The call of Hosea*): Now there lived in Israel a man named Hosea, with his young wife, Gomer, and their children. But Gomer was unfaithful to her marriage vows and wandered away into sin and shame. Hosea, being a man of tender heart and deep nature, as he wept over his own woe was led to see that after the same fashion Jehovah grieved at the whoredom of the children of Israel in departing from him, their true Saviour, and turning aside to the vile worship of heathen gods. His sorrow made him a prophet, and he proclaimed with power and pathos the divine grief over the sin of Israel, the baseness of their ingratitude, and the sure coming of judgment. At the end, however, he held forth the certain promise of forgiveness if only the nation would repent and turn to Jehovah with all their hearts.

The first scene takes place in the home of Hosea. The characters are Loruhamah, his daughter and Jezreel, his son; Ezra, a merchant, a friend of Hosea who admires and sympathizes with him; he knows well what danger is facing Israel; Elasah, a priest of the temple in which Hosea has been serving; a shallow thinker; and Zebadiah (a priest much like Elasah); he believes that Hosea is foolishly concerned over the state of Israel.

## SCENE I

TIME: Evening.

PLACE: A room in the home of Hosea. There is a table near the back of the room; two couches or low stools near sides of room; a low table and stool, at right center. There is a door at left leading to the street and one at right leading to the court-yard or inner rooms. Jezreel sits on stool copying scroll; he is so absorbed in

his work that he does not notice the entrance of Loruhamah, who enters, from left, with a water-jar and places it on table at rear, speaking as she reaches the table.

LORUHAMA (anxiously) : Our father is late to-night.

*(Jezreel writes on, absorbed in his work.)*

Think'st thou any harm has befallen him?

*(Jezreel still writes, failing to notice her; Loruhamah approaches, looks over his shoulder, kindly.)*

Jezreel!

JEZREEL (*starting*) : Forgive me, sister! Didst thou speak to me?

LORUHAMA (*half playfully*) : Aye, brother. (*Then seriously*) Dost thou have no fear for our father? He stays away so long!

JEZREEL (*reassuringly*) : Nay, Loruhamah, he will come presently; and see! I have finished the copy of this scroll which he has so long dreamed over! (*Holds it up for her approval and Loruhamah takes it, examining it curiously.*)

LORUHAMA (*wistfully*) : I would that I could read it! (*Brightening.*) Father will rejoice. Jezreel, (*earnestly*) hast noted how weary our father looks of late? What thinkest thou is troubling him?

JEZREEL (*understandingly*) : I know not, sister. I, too, have marked that he seems burdened (*thoughtfully*) as never since our mother went away. Mayhap 'tis memory.

LORUHAMA (*quickly*) : Nay, Jezreel; I feel 'tis some dream or some vision that he ponders when he thinks so earnestly.

*(Sound of approaching steps, off left. Both turn expectantly. Enter Ezra, from left. Jezreel and Loruhamah greet him with poorly disguised disappointment.)*

LORUHAMA and JEZREEL : Thou art welcome, Ezra; peace to you!

EZRA (*pleasantly*) : And am I *not* welcome?

LORUHAMA (*smiling*) : Truly! But we looked for our father!

EZRA : And he is not come?

JEZREEL (*hospitably*) : Nay, but he will come soon. Sit thou down.

*(Loruhamah arranges couch, at left, for Ezra who sits where she indicates.)*



LORUHAMAH (*earnestly*): We were saying that our father does seem much troubled of late. He sits for hours in deepest silence, oft-times over his scrolls, more often under the stars.

EZRA (*sympathetically*): Yea, I understand! Thy father, too, has the burden of our people on his heart. (*Thoughtfully.*) I stand daily in my market-place and see no truly reverent face.

JEZREEL (*in earnest questioning*): Why, Ezra? Is not our king a wise ruler? Are not our fields fruitful? Are not our temples a place of holy sacrifice?

EZRA (*understandingly*): Aye, lad! But the heart must pray as well as the good work. (*Sound of approaching steps; all rise expectantly as Hosea enters, left, wearily. He brightens in face and step as he sees Ezra.*)

JEZREEL: Welcome, Father!

LORUHAMAH (*leading Hosea to a couch, right*): Welcome, Father!

EZRA: Peace to thee, Hosea!

HOSEA (*hospitably*): And to thee, friend! Thou'rt welcome! (*Seats himself.*) I am glad thou'rt come to-night. I have much to say to thee.

EZRA: And I to thee. But speak thou first.  
(*They all settle themselves to talk.*)

HOSEA (*earnestly*): Ezra! The trafficking of deceitful merchants, the foolish sacrifices, the idolatry of our people burden my heart. It was not so when Moses led our fathers up from Egypt. Jehovah said: I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the first-ripe in the fig-tree at its first season; but they have consecrated themselves unto the shameful thing, and become abominable like that which they loved.

EZRA: So think I, when I read the scrolls.

JEZREEL (*interrupting politely*): Father, I have finished the copy!

HOSEA: Bring it, son! Ezra, when I do ponder this law—(*takes the scroll Jezreel has brought*).

(*Someone approaches; knocks. Enter, left, ELASAH and ZEBADIAH.*)

HOSEA (*rising courteously*): Welcome, Elasah! Peace to thee, Zebadiah!



ELASAH and ZEBADIAH : Peace to thy house, Hosea !

*(They all remain standing; Jezreel and Loruhamah staying at the side or back of the room.)*

HOSEA : Peace be unto you.

ELASAH : We come to thee in the name of the high priest, to beseech that when on the morrow thou speakest to the people in the solemn assembly, words of grace may come from thy lips. Of late thy words are full of gloom and we fear they stir up discontent among the people and loosen the hold of the priests, the men of God, upon the multitude.

ZEBADIAH : Moreover, thy words do not make the heart of the king glad. Yea, Hosea, much honor awaits thee if thou wilt speak words of hope and cheer about the greatness of our nation and the glory of its future.

HOSEA (*opening the scroll*) : Hear thou ! List ye to this word ! (*Reading*) O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee ? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee ? For your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the dew that goeth early away. Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets ; I have slain them by the words of my mouth ; and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth. For I desire goodness, and not sacrifice ; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings. Verily, I believe Jehovah hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, (*with earnest excitement*) because there is no truth, nor goodness, nor knowledge of God in the land. (*Bitterly.*) There is naught but swearing and breaking faith, and killing, and stealing and committing adultery. Truly—

ZEBADIAH (*protestingly*) : What ! Dost call us heathen ? Canst not see for thyself that God is with us ? Behold our green hills and beautiful vineyards ! Is not that a sure sign of Jehovah's favor ?

HOSEA (*frankly*) : So ! But as to thy vineyards, I say to thee, wine and new wine take away the understanding. Israel is defiled and we know not Jehovah !

ELASAH (*indignantly*) : How say'st thou we know not Jehovah ? Look thou at our temples. There are other prophets besides thee. Are they not wise ? They foretell great things for Israel.

HOSEA : They feed on the sin of my people, saith Jehovah, and set their hearts on their iniquity. They prophesy smooth things that men may put bread into their mouths.

ZEBADIAH: Hosea, thou'rt mad! Come! Say thou wilt show a courageous face in the temple on the morrow. This mood will leave thee when thou hast slept.

HOSEA (*decidedly*): Nay, Zebadiah! I do speak with all earnestness. Many months have I pondered o'er these laws: and I do know of a surety that we are wanderers from the way of God. As Jehovah liveth, I cannot but speak the truth before king and court and priest and people. We are sinning and we must make straight our lives.

ELASAH (*in surprised disappointment*): Then thou wilt not speak gracious words of blessing at holy feast tomorrow?

HOSEA: I dare not! I fear Jehovah!

ELASAH: Know thou then that the high priest knows full well what to do with prophets that stir up insurrection.

HOSEA (*sadly*): Farewell. Peace be with you.  
(*Elasah and Zebadiah go out.*)

EZRA (*who has watched the proceedings with keen interest; approaches Hosea with anxious sympathy*): Hosea, what meanest thou? Wilt risk thy life?

HOSEA: Yea, Ezra! Thou knowest I can say naught but what Jehovah hath spoken. If some one speak not to our people, we are lost.

EZRA: But your friends among the priests, Hosea?

HOSEA: They will be angry unto fury!

EZRA: And the people?

HOSEA (*with decision*): They may not heed, but they shall hear! Woe unto them! for they have wandered from me, saith Jehovah. Destruction unto them! for they have trespassed against me; though I would redeem them, yet they have spoken lies against me.

EZRA (*admiringly*): I am thy friend! God will hear my prayer for thee. Farewell! May God keep thee!

HOSEA: Farewell! God's peace go with thee.  
(*They part affectionately. Ezra goes out.*)

LORUHAMA (*approaches Hosea, touches his arm, gently questioning*): Father! Is Jehovah fiercely angry with us?



HOSEA (*tenderly*): Yea, daughter, but even as I love thy mother, and pray God that she may come back to us, and live with us in purity and love, so does God love Israel and yearn for her return to a life of righteousness. (*Speaking to audience in soliloquy.*) When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. The more the prophets called them, the more they went from them; they sacrificed unto the Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. Yet I taught Ephraim to walk; I took them on my arms; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man; with bands of love.

## CURTAIN

ALTERNATE ENDING: Loruhamah clasps her father's hand and all go out right, Jezreel bearing the precious scroll.

## SCENE II

NARRATOR: Scene II takes place in a street of the market-place, the next day. The characters are Zebadiah and Elasa; Meremoth, a citizen who realizes that Hosea is right; Nebo, a friend of Meremoth, who is skeptical of the teachings of the new prophet; Harim, a citizen who is ready to listen to any man who is interesting; Amos; and Ezra, his friend.

PLACE: *Street in market-place. Ezra's booth to the back of stage; a jewelry peddler seated near the booth; fruit vender near the opposite side of the stage; a small booth or platform is at the end of Ezra's stand, on which Hosea stands to talk. Citizens enter from time to time and join the crowd; curtain shows Elasa and Zebadiah talking quietly; they have an air of studied indifference.*

TIME: *A day later.*

ZEBADIAH: Let us stand here.

ELASAH: Art certain this is the place?

ZEBADIAH: Aye! There by Ezra's booth doth he stand daily.

ELASAH: Our friend Meremoth says many people come to hear him.

ZEBADIAH (*with disgust*): Aye, Meremoth is a fool! His head is turned with Hosea's babbling!

ELASAH (*quickly*): Peace! He cometh!

(*Enter Meremoth and Nebo, talking.*)



MEREMOTH (*earnestly to Nebo*): Thou shalt hear for thyself. He will come presently.

NEBO (*in doubt*): But have not our prophets told us truly? Is it not an act of wisdom, this, to trust in Assyria?

MEREMOTH: Peace, they come! You shall hear!

*(Meremoth, Nebo, Elasah and Zebadiah watch closely. Enter several citizens, Hosea among them, Harim leading and acting as spokesman.)*

HARIM (*flourishing*): Peace! Ho! Peace, all ye! Let us hear the prophet. Come, speak out the burden of thy message!

*(Crowd gathers around Hosea, who takes his place by Ezra's booth. Meremoth, Nebo, Elasah and Zebadiah come closer to listen.)*

HOSEA: Hear this word, ye children of Israel! Thus saith Jehovah: My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me; seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I also will forget thy children. When I would heal Israel, then is the iniquity of Ephraim uncovered, and the wickedness of Samaria; for they commit falsehood, and the thief entereth in, and the troop of robbers ravageth without. Israel hath cast off that which is good; the enemy shall pursue him. *(Hosea pauses as crowd murmurs restlessly.)*

ELASAH: Hear the trouble-monger! Thou'lt rue these words, Hosea! I'm off to the high priest. *(Elasah goes out.)*

ZEBADIAH: Aye, he's an idle babbler, and false to the land! Let's question him! *(Goes closer to Hosea. Hosea looks questioningly at him.)* How sayest thou thus of Israel?

HOSEA (*warmly*): Thus saith Jehovah concerning Israel: They return, but not to him that is on high. They shall cry unto Jehovah, my God, we, Israel, know thee! But my God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him.

*(Crowd murmurs restlessly again.)*

MEREMOTH: Peace! Silence! Hear the prophet again! Speak on!

ZEBADIAH (*stubbornly*): Heed him not, foolish ones! He is a blasphemer, and would scorn our temples and our sacrifices!

MEREMOTH (*defiantly*): Yea! But thou know'st he doth speak the truth. Speak! Hosea, we would hear more!

HOSEA (*in earnest excitement*): Even though you sacrifice on the tops of mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, yet are you joined to idols. Yea, ye shall go with your flocks and herds to seek Jehovah; but ye shall not find him. Your doings will not suffer you to return to Jehovah! You have dealt treacherously against him. You make the king glad with your wickedness—

(*Crowd murmurs disapproval.*)

and the princes with your lies—Verily, even the prophets have stumbled. God will reject you. Judgment springeth up as a hemlock in the furrows of the field. Blow ye the trumpet!

(*Crowd still more excited.*)

ZEBADIAH (*disgustedly*): Enough! Enough! Let us go! (*He starts off, and the crowd makes as if to scatter.*)

MEREMOTH: Hold! Silence, all ye! Hear him yet again. They tell us that we shall be saved by a league with Egypt or with Assyria. What say you?

HOSEA: Egypt and Assyria are not able to heal you, neither will they cure your wounds. It is thy destruction, O Israel, that thou art against me, against thy help; saith Jehovah. Ye sow the wind, ye shall reap the whirlwind!

(*People look aghast at one another; Zebadiah withdraws to the edge of the stage; Jezreel enters and watches Hosea admiringly.*)

HARIM: Hear ye! Hear ye! He speaks the truth!

MEREMOTH: 'Tis the word of a prophet! Heed him.

(*Ezra enters.*)

HOSEA (*fiercely*): Thus saith Jehovah: I wrote for you the ten thousand things of my law; but they are counted as a strange thing. The balances of deceit are in thy hand, O Israel. Ye have plowed wickedness; ye have reaped iniquity. (Pauses as he sees Jezreel who has come up close to him; he gazes thoughtfully at the boy and a look of tenderness slowly comes over his face. When he speaks, it is in a changed pleading voice.) Hear ye, my people! Come ye that are bent on backsliding; if thou wilt turn to God and do kindness and justice, he will not execute the fierceness of his anger. Come, let us return unto Jehovah. Say no more to the work of thy hands, Ye are our gods; for in Jehovah only do the fatherless find mercy.

(*Elasah returns.*)



ELASAH: What! Still listening to this traitor?

HARIM: He speaks the truth.

ELASAH (*angrily*): Let him speak the truth in prison if he will. Behold (*pointing off stage*) the king's guards come to take him.  
(*Crowd falls back to one side.*)

EZRA: Hold! (*to Elasah, scornfully*). Thou wilt betray this man to the king's guards? Very well. Then thou shalt be with him in prison. Long enough have I kept silence. The king shall know this day whence came the gold that paid for the building of the new summer dwelling wherein thou makest merry with thy friends.  
(*Crowd looks amazed.*)

CITIZEN: Ah! the temple tithes!  
(*Elasah looks about and seeing menacing looks on all faces withdraws hastily.*)

WOMAN FROM THE CROWD: Ah, man of God, but the sin hath struck too deep. There is no healing for us. Hast thou not said that Jehovah will be "unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness"?

HOSEA: Nay, woman, say not there is no healing for us. Thus saith Jehovah: I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for mine anger will turn away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.

(*Two guards enter.*)

His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the grain, and blossom as the vine; the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.

(*Crowd closes in about Hosea and moves off to left. Two guards watch crowd move off, looking at each other questioningly.*)

FIRST GUARD: Where is that disturber of the peace whom we were sent to find?

SECOND GUARD (*shakes his head*): I see no enemy of the King hereabouts. Let us be off to our posts. (*They go out.*)

CURTAIN





# ISAIAH, THE PROPHET

A Dramatization in Three Acts

By

Florence Reeves

# ISAIAH, THE PROPHET

## THE PEOPLE OF THE PLAY

NARRATOR, a man, or woman.

ISAIAH, the prophet. Tall, dark man, if possible. He is about 30 years old in the first two acts. In the last act he is an old man. He lives close to God and is sensitive to the messages that Jehovah sends him, and bold to tell the people about it in the face of dangers. He is stern, yet tender; humble, yet proud of his calling; fierce in his message, yet has a great yearning and love for the people.

REHOBAM, a young nobleman in the first two acts. Middle-aged in the last act. He has been impressed with Isaiah before the play begins and the message has been on his mind. He becomes one of Isaiah's closest friends. He is sympathetic and lovable with an eagerness for knowledge of God. Isaiah is drawn to him. He should show his nobleness in courtesy and reverence. He has a character of stability and worth.

ELIPHAZ, a scorner who is richly appareled and has a haughty air. He feels superior to all save other noblemen, and is very condescending in his attitude toward Isaiah. He is quite insolent to all others and finds a part of his amusement in life in mocking serious things. Jeering at Isaiah is his latest hobby.

HURAM, a nobleman who is in sympathy with the attitudes of Eliphaz and who is his friend.

HASSENAH, a nobleman who is the friend of Eliphaz and Hiram and has the same ideals that they have.

URIAH, a devout priest. He is the friend of Isaiah and is a quiet, reserved man, bowing to God in everything. He is aroused only in the last act.

ZECHARIAH, the friend of Isaiah, who is another devout believer but not so solemn as Uriah. He is proper, sedate, and rather formal, yet has more warmth than Uriah. Both men say things in a very precise and deliberate way.

SHEAR-JASHUB, a son of Isaiah. A mere boy about eight years old in the second act; in the last act a man in middle life, but still eager and willing to be of help to the nation he loves, and although he wishes to stay with his father, he goes to be of service. He,



too, is a prophet, and a true man of God. He is thoughtful, and reserved, yet has a jubilation that his friends wonder at.

CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD, a pompous man, blustering; he wants to make a stir more than anything else.

ELIAKIM, over the household of the king. A man sedate and slightly haughty, feeling the importance of his position; yet he is polite and reverential to Isaiah as he believes in the man in spite of his master's attitude. He is very formal and speaks deliberately.

SHEBNA, a scribe.

BILDAD, the engineer of the king. A suave man who wishes to do all for the king, rather protesting that the king should not see the pool for it is below his dignity. He treats Isaiah haughtily and feels himself to be the superior.

TWO SERVANTS, or ELDERS; they escort the king's man, Eliakim, and are always in the background.

SEVERAL SOLDIERS.

MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN, in the crowd.

## ACT I

NARRATOR: The characters of the first Act are Isaiah, the Prophet, who lives close to God and who is bold to proclaim his messages to the people; Rehoboam, a young nobleman who has been impressed with Isaiah's earnestness and who is eager for a knowledge of God; Eliphaz, a scorner whose latest hobby is jeering at Isaiah; Hassenah and Hiram, other noblemen, who are in sympathy with Eliphaz. The scene is laid in the market-place. The time is early morning.

SCENE: *The market-place.*

TIME: *Early morning.*

*Enter Hiram, Rehoboam, and Hassenah, talking as they enter.*

HURAM: Rehoboam, thou art mad to protest against our sacrifices. Do we not obey the law?

REHOBAM: The letter, yes. That is just my protest. Men come up to sacrifice who oppress the poor, and break all the commandments in our law. They are haughty, arrogant, and have no thought of God! (*Vehemently.*)

HASSENAH: Hush, man! Did we not know thee, we would think thee a man given to insurrection!

REHOBAM (turning to Hassenah determinedly): Thou knowest the worship has become but vain oblation! The prayers are mockery to my soul!

HURAM (nonchalantly): Oh, be not worried about the prayers!

HASSENAH: Rehoboam, thou art too serious minded! The country is not in an ideal state, 'tis true. It is a small remnant who still worship Jehovah in heart. But what is it to thee if the sacrifices and solemn meetings are become a form? (*Shrugs his shoulders.*) No one else divines the difference so why shouldst thou protest?

REHOBAM: Our country has become as an oak whose leaf fadeth and as a garden that hath no water! Even King Ahaz does nothing to stem the downward tide of things!

HURAM: Come, come, thou art too solemn to be good company. (*Jovially*) Canst thou not smile?

(*Enter Eliphaz from left. Meets three men at left.*)

Good morrow, Eliphaz; I am glad to see thee merry.

ELIPHAZ: Good health to you all, good friends, and to your families. (*He laughs as he speaks.*)

HASSENAH: Thou seemest to be concealing some hilarity; canst thou not share it with thy friends?

ELIPHAZ: Oh, yes, indeed. Have you not heard of this new man who calls himself a prophet?

HASSENAH: This man—Isaiah?

ELIPHAZ: The very same! We entertained him yesterday and so much mirth did he create, we made merry until early morning! (*He laughs loudly.*)

REHOBAM (thoughtfully): Strange! I heard him once—but I cannot recall that he was so full of hilarity. He rather made me shudder with his dire forebodings!

ELIPHAZ: I'll warrant he did! The mirth I speak of was of our own making. He did go on in his own dark way (*mocks Isaiah in tone and gesture to a ridiculous degree and amuses his friends greatly*) about the land being full of idols that men had made with their own hands. He did likewise talk of haughty men that should be brought low! (*Laughs.*) Oh, and I must tell you



what he said of the daughters of Zion! He said they all were haughty and walked with outstretched necks and wanton eyes! (*Laughs.*) He said that if these daughters (*shakes finger at men*) did not change their ways, the Lord would one day take away their rings and bracelets and give them in their place sack-cloth and ashes! (*Laughs.*) I tell you, 'twas true hilarity! I have not had such sport for lo these many months!

*(All laugh hilariously except Rehoboam, who smiles a little but is really very serious and thoughtful.)*

HURAM: No doubt it was! Would I had been there, too! I should like to see and hear this man that all Jerusalem talks of.

REHOBAM (*in serious tones. The others smile a little to each other as he speaks, but they listen. He is commanding in manner.*) Thou wouldst not want to hear him twice if thou wouldst live a merry life hereafter. When I did hear him speak, it was

"Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning that they may follow strong drink; that tarry late into the night till wine inflame them!"

(*Turning to Hiram*) Methinks the coat would fit too tight for thee. Or then again—

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil;

That put darkness for light and light for darkness."

'Tis not a sermon thou canst rest at ease on. When he says, "Woe!" he points to me! I am glad I was not there, Eliphaz, for 'twould not have been a balm to rest.

HASSENAH (*solemnly, with fun in his eyes*): Rehoboam cannot smile this day!

*(Enter several men pointing, laughing, and sneering. They enter with backs to audience, and are pointing off stage, right.)*

ELIPHAZ (*startled*): Upon my word! The man comes here!

*(Enter Isaiah followed by other men, women, and children, who are scoffing and having a great deal of fun at his expense.)*

REHOBAM: 'Tis he! (*Aside*) I care not to stay—but—something holds me—

HURAM (*advances to crowd—looks over Isaiah during the commotion*): Man, art thou Isaiah, the new prophet?



ISAIAH: I am he.

HURAM: We'd hear thee speak. (*Folds arms. Speaks in a falsetto voice.*) I have been longing to hear thee these two months!

SEVERAL: Yes, let's hear thee! Speak!

(*Enter several more people as a crowd gathers.*)

ELIPHAZ: Yes, give us more mirth!

HASSENAH: Mirth and merriment; we want not woes. (*Waves hand.*)  
We care not for woes!

(*All laugh.*)

HURAM: Why dost thou hesitate as though thou hadst not learned a speech for this occasion! Go on! We'll help thee on with it, as thou dost need some help!

ELIPHAZ: Do speak to us of—(*Pretends deep thought*). Let us say, the earth!

(*There is great hilarity, followed by a sudden hush, as Isaiah looks at one after another. Then he begins.*)

ISAIAH:

Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O Earth,  
For the Lord hath spoken;  
I have nourished and brought up children  
And they have rebelled against me.  
The ox knoweth his owner and the ass, his master's crib;  
But Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.  
Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity,  
A seed of evil doers, children that deal corruptly:  
They have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One  
of Israel,  
They are estranged and gone backwards. (*Thunders.*)  
Why will ye be still stricken, that ye revolt more and more?  
The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint.  
From the sole of the foot even unto the head  
There is no soundness in it!

HURAM: Thou art becoming too vehement! Do we not sacrifice and hold the solemn assembly as the law requireth? What dost thou say to that?

ISAIAH:

What unto me is the multitude of your sacrifices? saith Jehovah.  
I have had enough of the burnt offerings of rams

And the fat of fed beasts! I delight not in the blood of lambs  
Or of bullocks, or of he-goats.  
When ye come to appear before me,  
Who hath required this at your hands?  
Bring no more vain oblations.  
Incense is an abomination unto me;  
Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth;  
They are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them!  
When ye make many prayers, I will not hear.  
Your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean;  
Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes;  
Cease to do evil, learn to do good. Seek justice;  
Relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

*(Noise without as of soldiers. Enter Captain of  
the guards and two other soldiers.)*

CAPTAIN: Why block you up the streets? Get ye hence.

*(A few leave. Others pay no attention.)*

Get ye gone, I say! No such attempts to disturb the peace  
shall be made while I am captain of the guards. *(To Isaiah)*  
Wilt thou not move? I'll aid thee. *(Shoves Isaiah off, right.  
Other soldiers disperse the crowd.)* Out with thee! And let  
there be no more clamor in the streets. *(He goes off, left, fol-  
lowed by soldiers.)*

*(Rehoboam enters slowly, from left, looks about,  
goes to right, and beckons. Isaiah enters, right.)*

ISAIAH *(surprised)*: Didst thou not go?

REHOBAM: No, I would ask thee more.

ISAIAH *(eagerly)*: Ask on; I shall be glad to answer thee.

REHOBAM *(pacing back and forth)*: Many things are in my mind to  
ask thee, but one I would have answered more than all. *(He  
stops before Isaiah and looks earnestly at him.)* 'Tis this—how  
dost thou know thy message is of God? My friends do think that  
thou art mad, but I know thou art not. Wilt thou tell me, for I  
am persuaded of thy sincerity, how dost thou know God spoke  
to thee?

ISAIAH: Sit thee down, just here, and I shall be glad to tell thee. *(Isaiah  
sits down also and begins confidentially as a friend would tell a  
friend the great vision of his life. As he gets into it, he loses the  
sense of the man with him and sees only the glory of God and*



*his vision again.*) 'Twas on this wise—In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord, sitting on a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another and said, Holy, Holy, Holy is Jehovah of Hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the foundations of the threshold shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. (*Rises as if answering over again.*) Then said I—Woe is me! for I am undone! because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of Hosts. (*He pauses transfixed a moment. Rehoboam watches with beaming face and lives it too.*) Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he touched my mouth with it, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is forgiven. And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send and who will go for us? (*He pauses a moment, and takes a step or two forward as if really doing it again.*) Then I said, Here am I, send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye, indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn again, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man, and the land be utterly waste, and Jehovah have removed men far away, and the forsaken places be many in the midst of the land. And if there be yet a tenth in it, it also shall in turn be eaten up; as a terebinth, and as an oak, whose stock remaineth, when they are felled; so the holy seed is the stock thereof. (*He remains as if seeing the whole vision over again and hearing the voice of God speaking to him.*)

## CURTAIN

## ACT II

### SCENE I

NARRATOR: The next scene is at the end of the conduit of the upper pool. Isaiah and Shear-jashub, his son, are waiting for the King, who is coming with his chief builder to inspect the new conduit.



SCENE: *The end of the conduit of the upper pool.*

*Isaiah and Shear-jashub enter wearily.*

SHEAR-JASHUB: Can we not sit down, Father? I am getting tired.

ISAIAH: I know thou art, my son. (*Pause.*) Surely we may rest, and as we wait here, perhaps 'twere best I tell you all. 'Thoughtful thou hast been of late as well as I. (*Pause.*) Dost thou understand quite clearly this alliance that the king would make?

SHEAR-JASHUB: No, I do not.

ISAIAH: King Ahaz is afraid of an alliance at our north. Israel and Syria have joined together and Pekah, king of Israel, warred against Jerusalem and could not prevail against us! However, Judah's heart doth tremble as the trees of the forest tremble with the wind. (*He looks very thoughtful.*) Judah would call in Assyria to help her and protect her from the North countries. I like not this alliance that the king would make.

SHEAR-JASHUB: Then that is why thou hast been so much in prayer of late?

ISAIAH: It is, my son. And Jehovah hath said unto me, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou and Shear-jashub, thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, in the highway of the fuller's field. And say unto him the message I have given thee. (*Pause.*) And so we wait, my son.

*(Noise without. Enter King with Bildad, his chief builder, and several attendants.)*

AHAZ: My good Bildad, I know thou art trustworthy and I have faith in thy work and building, so be patient that I am come, for I would see this conduit with eyes that are mine own. (*Business-like.*) Thinkest thou it will hold out, should we have a siege? There may be one at hand.

*(Isaiah rises and advances to the King.)*

ISAIAH (*bowing*): O King, give ear, for Jehovah hath given me a message for thy house.

AHAZ: Ah—yes? (*Looks him over.*) Thou art one—Isaiah?

ISAIAH: I am, O King.

AHAZ: If thy message be brief and to the point, say on.

ISAIAH: I will not waste my words. Thus saith Jehovah:  
Take heed and be quiet;

Fear not, neither let thine heart be faint,  
Because of these two tails of smoking fire-brands,  
For the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and of the son of Remaliah.

*(In a determined voice; the last especially emphatic.)*

Because Syria hath counselled evil against thee,  
Ephraim also and the son of Remaliah, saying,  
Let us go up against Judah and vex it,  
And let us make a breach therein for us,  
And set up a king in the midst of it, even the house of Tabeel;  
Thus saith the Lord, Jehovah,  
It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.

AHAZ: Perhaps. *(He waves his hand nonchalantly.)* But even now we are in danger of Syria and Israel. We have to have protection and Assyria will protect us well.

ISAIAH: She hath the larger mouth and so can swallow more.

AHAZ *(in a superior way)*: Assyrian messengers are very friendly, and desire the compact likewise. The terms are in our favor.

ISAIAH *(desperately)*: If indeed thou dost not heed what I have said, ask thee a sign from Jehovah, thy God! Ask it either in the depth or in the height above.

AHAZ *(haughtily)*: I will not ask! Neither will I tempt Jehovah! *(He turns hastily to Bildad.)* Let's to our business here!

ISAIAH: But stay! Is it a small thing for you to weary men, that you will weary my God also? Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: the land whose two kings thou abhorrest shall be forsaken. Jehovah shall bring upon thee and upon thy people and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—even the king of Assyria. In that day *(slowly, with emphasis. The King begins to look frightened)* the Lord will shave with a razor, even with the king of Assyria, all the land of Judah and *that* shall be thy sign!

AHAZ: I have no time to waste upon thy dreams. *(To Bildad)* Come, make haste.

*(Ahaz and Bildad go out, left, followed by the attendants.)*

SHEAR-JASHUB: Why does not the King heed Jehovah's message?

ISAIAH: It is even as thou hast heard me say many times, the ears of this



people are heavy and their eyes are shut. They do not understand with their heart. Come, let us go. I have done as Jehovah commanded. I can do no more.

*(Isaiah and Shear-jashub go out, right.)*

## CURTAIN

## ACT II

### SCENE II

NARRATOR: On the next day Isaiah, two of his friends, and Shear-jashub are in a room in Isaiah's home.

SCENE: *The home of Isaiah.*

TIME: *The next day.*

*Shear-jashub, Isaiah, and Zechariah enter from right, and seat themselves. Uriah enters from left.*

ISAIAH: I am glad thou art come, Uriah, for Jehovah said unto me, 'Take thee a great tablet, and write upon it with the pen of a man, and I will take unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.

*(Uriah seats himself at right of Isaiah, cross-legged. He has a board or very low table to write on as Isaiah speaks.)*

URIAH: 'Then I, too, am glad I came, for to be a faithful witness of Jehovah is a work in life I long to do. Shall I write while thou dost speak?

ISAIAH: If thou wilt, good friend. *(He pauses.)*

*(Uriah reaches for board, or table, on which to write. Shear-jashub hands him a scroll which he has in his hand.)*

I do wish Rehoboam, a friend I lately made, would come, for I would bind up the testimony among my best disciples. *(He looks toward the door, left, as if expecting Rehoboam.)*

URIAH: We can wait awhile if thou dost desire it.

ZECHARIAH: Didst thou know that messengers were sent away this morning to Assyria with tribute money?

ISAIAH: Yes, I know. 'Twere as if the King had done exactly what I warned against. 'Tis the very thing that hath caused me to



write what Jehovah hath told me. (*Pause.*) But let's proceed. Time's lost in waiting.

*(After Isaiah has spoken a sentence or two, Rehoboam comes quietly in and, in order not to disturb him, leans against the door unnoticed by the prophet.)*

Art thou ready, good Uriah?

*(Uriah inclines his head in assent.)*

Forasmuch as this people have refused the waters of Shiloah, that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son; now therefore the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the River, strong and many, even the King of Assyria and all his glory; and it shall sweep onward into Judah; and it shall overflow and pass through; it shall reach even to the neck; and the strengthening of its wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel. (*This is spoken very slowly so as to give time for writing.*) Jehovah of Hosts, him shall ye sanctify; let him be your fear, let him be your dread. But the people shall pass through it sore distressed and hungry; and it shall come to pass that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse by their king and by their God, and they shall look into the earth, and behold, distress and darkness and the gloom of anguish shall be there! (*He walks back and forth as he speaks; sometimes stops or hesitates when speaking as if to be sure it was what should be written. He pauses.*)

REHOBAM (*slowly and in an awed voice*): But—

*(Isaiah turns and brightens as he sees who it is.)*

But—shall it all be darkness? Can nothing save them from such anguish?

ISAIAH: Right glad I am that thou didst come in time to hear it, and hast asked that question. (*Pause.*) No—

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
They that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with

righteousness from henceforth, even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of Hosts will perform this!

*(All are wrapt in the vision. Even Uriah has become so absorbed he has forgotten to write.)*

## CURTAIN

## ACT III

### SCENE I

NARRATOR: Thirty-four years have passed since the last act. Isaiah is an old man and has been ill recently. Rehoboam, his staunch companion of earlier days, is still his friend. Eliakim and the elders come to Isaiah on a mission from the king.

SCENE: *The home of Isaiah.*

TIME: *Thirty-four years after the Second Act. Isaiah is an old man. He has been ill recently. He enters very slowly, sits in a chair, and reads a scroll.*

*Enter Rehoboam.*

ISAIAH: Good morrow, Rehoboam; hast thou news? Thy gait would say so!

REHOBAM: I have indeed, but first I would inquire as to thy health.

ISAIAH: 'Tis quite as good as yesterday, my friend—but would I were as strong as I was once; then would I go to the king and give his house a message. But to thy news!

REHOBAM: Ah, yes, I had almost forgotten! *(As he speaks, he seats himself close by the prophet. He is very tender toward him.)* Isaiah, we have loved thee these many years, and have seen many of thy prophecies fulfilled, but none has impressed my mind as this one has. Thy words have been enacted almost to the letter. As thou dost full well know, Sennacherib's army is encamped about the city. He hath shaved the whole land as thou didst say he would so many years ago. The whole land is destroyed except Jerusalem and now he is here and thy words to Ahaz have proved most true!

*(Isaiah nods his head thoughtfully. Both are quiet for a moment.)*



But yesterday did Rabshakeh speak his message from Sen-nacherib. He spoke it in the Jew's own language, much to our astonishment. My own ears did hear the message, and he spoke our language well! (*He picks up a scroll from his lap.*) But I did bring thee here a copy of what he had to say that Joah, the recorder, gave to me. Shall I read it to thee?

ISAIAH (*nodding*): Read on.

REHOBOAM (*reading*): "Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? I say, thy counsel and strength for the war are but vain words; now on whom dost thou trust that thou hast rebelled against me? Behold, thou trustest on the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it; so is Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to all that trust him."

ISAIAH: True words! Yes, very true!

REHOBOAM (*continuing*): "But if thou say to me, We trust in Jehovah our God, is not that he whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar? Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, Jehovah will deliver us; Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the King of Assyria? And am I now come up without Jehovah against this land to destroy it? Jehovah said unto me, Go up against this land and destroy it." (*He folds up the scroll.*) A good speech—thinkest thou not so?

ISAIAH (*nodding*): A shrewd man—this. He speaks in our own language, he says Jehovah hath not saved other nations, that our altars have been removed, and that there is no trust in Egypt! He knows conditions here. What made they answer?

REHOBOAM: Not a word. The king did command it so!

ISAIAH: 'Twere best.

REHOBOAM: I suppose thou hast it right—I have been thinking these last days of those words you spoke long ago. I am trying to recall the words exactly—was it not that Assyria would come up and over-run Judah as a great river?

(*Isaiah nods.*)

It truly has been so. 'Tis many years since first we felt this crushing vassalage. The demand for tribute hath been growing worse instead of better.



ISAIAH: 'Tis as I said 'twould be—But even now we must not give up hope, nor flee to Egypt for protection. In Jehovah only is our strength. Jehovah hath told me this concerning Assyria—

He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, neither shall he come before it with shield, nor cast up a mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and he shall not come into this city, saith Jehovah. For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake, and for my servant David's sake. (*Pause.*)

I wonder what the king intends to do. Hezekiah is far wiser than his father Ahaz was.

REHOBAM: His plans are not yet known.

(*There is a knock at the door.*)

ISAIAH: Wilt thou answer that, good friend?

(*Rehoboam answers knock. Enter Eliakim and elders. They bow very low to Isaiah.*)

Friends, I bid thee welcome.

ELIAKIM (*bowing again*): To thy health, O prophet.

ISAIAH: I thank thee. Wilt thou rest?

(*Rehoboam seats Eliakim and the elders.*)

ELIAKIM: We will. We came in haste.

ISAIAH: Hast thou a mission?

ELIAKIM: We come from the King, who sends his greetings to thee.

ISAIAH: Say on.

ELIAKIM: Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble and of rebuke and of contumely, for the children are come to the birth, and there is no strength to bring them forth. It may be Jehovah thy God will hear the word of Rabshakeh, whom the King of Assyria, his master, hath sent to defy the living God, and will rebuke the words which Jehovah thy God hath heard; wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left. (*Pause. It is very quiet. Isaiah is in deep thought.*)

ISAIAH (*slowly but determinedly as if he were positive*): This shall ye say to your master, Thus saith Jehovah, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the King of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will put a spirit within him, and he shall hear tidings, and shall return unto his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land. This shalt thou say to the king.

ELIAKIM (*rising*): We thank thee, seer. May thy wisdom increase as thy years. (*He bows; starts to leave.*)

ISAIAH: Take my message safely!

ELIAKIM: That shall be our first duty, O prophet. Farewell.  
(*Eliakim and the elders go out.*)

ISAIAH: Rehoboam, I am very anxious. But the king must heed my message! Wilt thou leave me alone that I may lift up my voice to Jehovah for my people? If thou hast further news, bring it quickly, I beg.

REHOBAM (*going toward right*): That I shall. Farewell, my friend.

ISAIAH: Farewell. Join thy petition with mine.  
(*Rehoboam goes out, right.*)

## CURTAIN

## ACT III

### SCENE II

NARRATOR: The next scene takes place a week later in the home of Isaiah.

SCENE: *The same as in Scene I.*

TIME: *A week later.*

*Isaiah and Shear-jashub enter, Isaiah leaning upon his son. Shear-jashub has his arm thrown across his father's shoulder as though he wanted to stay with him.*

ISAIAH: Must thou go back on watch so soon?

SHEAR-JASHUB: Yes, Father, I must leave. When I came home last night, the captain said I should return this morning. 'Tis a tiresome business, too—this watching on the wall; but yet I know it must be done in times like these. Sennacherib's army hath done nothing yet. Three days ago as I did watch, I noted a confusion as of fright among them, but nothing seemed to come of it.

ISAIAH: We shall be saved—I know it!

SHEAR-JASHUB: I know thou sayest rightly, Father. But I must away and be early at my post.



ISAIAH: I should like to have thee stay, but I am glad that thou art willing to watch on that grim wall in our time of need. Thou provest that a prophet can do other things than prophesy. Farewell; God speed.

SHEAR-JASHUB (*as he goes toward door*): Farewell, Father. My watch will be at least five hours today. Farewell. (*He goes out.*)

(*Isaiah takes up a scroll and reads a little, but soon drops it and is in deep thought. Enter Zechariah, Uriah, and Rehoboam.*)

URIAH: Thy health—and all thy house!

ZECHARIAH: I likewise say.

REHOBAM: We'll gladly listen.

(*The newcomers arrange themselves as if to listen to the words of Isaiah. While they are seating themselves, Shear-jashub enters, running. He is breathless.*)

ZECHARIAH: Pray tell us quickly! What is thy news?

(*They are all gathered around Shear-jashub. They support him that he may get his breath.*)

URIAH: Tell us, man!

SHEAR-JASHUB. As—soon—as—I have—breath. When I did arrive at the watch tower—no man was there—and I took my place directly. But such a sight as I did see, I cannot tell thee of. (*His excitement increases.*) Half of Sennacherib's army lie dead; the others are fleeing!

ZECHARIAH: We are saved!

URIAH: Jehovah hath done this!

REHOBAM (*turning to Isaiah*): Jehovah hath spoken through thee once again.

(*Isaiah nods. He seems to be in thought.*)

URIAH: Gracious is Jehovah and righteous. Yea, our God is merciful.

ZECHARIAH: Thou didst say Jehovah would defend this city to save it and he hath done it!

ISAIAH: Friends, it is a light thing that Jehovah hath delivered us from our enemies; 'tis a small thing that he hath slain the Assyrian hosts, for he shall do greater things than this and as surely as we have been delivered now, He will give us a king who will conquer the earth, and reign in the hearts of men.



And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit. And the spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and of might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of Jehovah.

*(Isaiah rises. He is wrapt in what he is saying. The rest are listening with breathless attention. He looks upward as if receiving the words directly from God.)*

And his delight shall be in the fear of Jehovah, and he shall not judge after the fear of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins.

*(Pause.)*

And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea.

*(All are watching Isaiah, who stands with a new light on his face.)*

CURTAIN

# JEREMIAH

A Dramatization in Two Acts

By

Elizabeth Hormell

# JEREMIAH

## THE PEOPLE OF THE PLAY

JEREMIAH, the Prophet.

KING ZEDEKIAH.

A PRIEST.

A SOLDIER.

TWO PRINCES.

AN HUSBANDMAN.

A BOY, Baruch.

BARUCH when a man.

KING'S SERVANT.

OTHER JEWS in the crowd.

REBEKAH.

RACHEL.

A WEALTHY WOMAN.

## ACT I

### SCENE I

SCENE: *A room in a Jewish house. Door at right; loom at left. A young girl, Rebekah, enters, right, and begins weaving. She is dressed in the garb of a middle-class Jewess.*

REBEKAH: Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come. It is the joyful time. Let me give thanks to Jehovah for the love of my beloved. My beloved hath set me as a seal upon his heart. He saith that I am all fair, and that our love is stronger than death.

*(Enter Jeremiah, left, a young and handsome Jew.  
He goes toward her.)*

JEREMIAH: Rebekah, Rebekah!

REBEKAH: I am thine, O my lord! *(She rises.)* I know thou hast something troubling thy soul. Tell me, my heart, for thy sorrows are mine, and I would share them with thee.



JEREMIAH: Yea, I would tell thee, O thou whom my soul loveth! (*He sits down.*) The word of the Lord came unto me saying, "Before thou wast born I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."

REBEKAH (*interrupting*): Thou! A prophet! But why not? Thou art indeed worthy.

JEREMIAH: I feared I was not worthy, and therefore I answered, "Ah, Lord God, behold I cannot speak, for I am a child."

REBEKAH: Thou a child! Thou—

JEREMIAH: In God's sight, yea! But he said unto me, "Say not, I am a child; for thou shalt go to all to whom I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces; for I am with thee to deliver thee," saith the Lord. Then the Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, "Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth."

REBEKAH: Surely thou art blessed among men, and I—I am blessed among women, because thou art my beloved. (*Pause.*) But why art thou sad, dear one?

JEREMIAH (*rising*): Wilt thou be very strong and courageous?

REBEKAH: Yea, yea! See! I am quite strong. (*Goes to him.*)

JEREMIAH: Nay, do not touch me—for I may not touch thee. Thus said Jehovah unto me. "Thou shalt not take thee a wife, neither shalt thou have sons or daughters."

REBEKAH: It cannot be! God is good—he gave thee to me and he will not take thee away.

JEREMIAH: Yet hath he spoken it, Rebekah! The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!

REBEKAH: Then farewell; I cannot speak more.

(*Jeremiah starts away, but stops as he reaches the door.*)

JEREMIAH: Yet one word! Until the day of life break and the shadows flee away, I will love thee. Dost thou not remember that I told thee our love was strong as death? Be thou faithful, and Jehovah shall reward us!

(*Jeremiah leaves. Rebekah stretches out her hands helplessly, after him, then slowly follows.*)

CURTAIN

## ACT II

NARRATOR: Scene Two takes place outside the city gate a few days later.

SCENE: *Outside the city gate. Jeremiah enters slowly, sits down wearily upon a stone at center and prays.*

JEREMIAH: Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet let me talk with thee of thy judgment. Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Behold, I have forsaken mine house, and even for thy sake have I left mine heritage and given up the dearly beloved of my soul. Yet, O Lord, let me forget mine own woes and look upon the woes and sins of thy people. Let me know thy will, and speak forth those things that thou shalt put in my heart. *(He drops his head in his hands.)*

*(Enter an Husbandman, right, who hails Jeremiah.)*

HUSBANDMAN: Peace be unto thee, friend!

JEREMIAH: What dost thou?

HUSBANDMAN: I am an husbandman, and go to look at my newly bought field.

JEREMIAH: Go not forth into the field, nor walk by the way; for the sword of the enemy and fear is on every side.

HUSBANDMAN: What sayest thou?

JEREMIAH: Even so! And they shall eat up thine harvest and thy bread which thy sons and daughters should eat; they shall eat up thy flocks and thy herds; they shall eat up thy vines and thy fig-trees. They shall carry forth captive the husband with the wife, and the aged that is full of days. Behold, I will give their wives unto others, and their fields to them that shall inherit them.

HUSBANDMAN: Who art thou that givest away wives and fields, mad man?

JEREMIAH: It is not I who give away. Yet if thou wouldst hear more, come at this hour on the morrow to the gate of the Lord's house.

*(Husbandman goes away, half frightened. Enter soldier, left.)*

SOLDIER: Ho, thou with the downcast countenance!

JEREMIAH: Thou art a soldier.

SOLDIER: Of King Josiah's guard!



JEREMIAH: Hear this, then. Behold, a people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth. They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel, and have no mercy; their voice roareth like the sea; and they ride upon horses, set in array as men for war.

SOLDIER (*compassionately*): Ho! Thou art a poor fool and hast the spring madness. Here is a penny. (*Tosses him a copper.*)

JEREMIAH (*giving it back*): I want not thy money; but I charge thee to be at the gate of the Lord's house even at this same hour on the morrow.

SOLDIER: I will, for even thy raving is better than the droning of priests. (*He goes out.*)

(*Enter a little boy, left, who gazes around with a joyous face.*)

JEREMIAH: I would my heart were as happy as thy face, boy.

BOY: I am happy, for it is the growing season, and my mother lets me come to the gate. Look! I love them so—the sky, the fields, even the funny turtle's voice. And see, the fig tree is getting green, and the grape vines smell so sweet. In a few moons my mother and sisters will tread the wine press, and if I stand near I shall have some of the juice. (*Stops and looks closely at Jeremiah.*) Art thou sad, Sir?

JEREMIAH (*musings half to himself*): I beheld the earth and lo, it was without form and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness and all the cities thereof were broken down.

BOY: O, do not! Thou sayest such fearsome things, poor sad man.

JEREMIAH: I wish not to sadden thee, boy. What is thy name?

BOY: Baruch, Sir!

JEREMIAH: Farewell, Baruch. Go home to thy mother and tell her.

BOY: What sayest thou? I do not understand.

JEREMIAH: Nothing, boy. Go now.

BOY: I love thee for thy dark, sad eyes, but not for thy strange words. I shall come again if my mother wills. (*He goes out.*)



JEREMIAH: I am weary, but my work for today is not yet done. Jehovah will send others.

*(Enter a richly dressed woman, right. She passes disdainfully in front of Jeremiah, ignoring him.)*

JEREMIAH (*addressing her*): And when thou art spoiled, what wilt thou do? Though thou clothest thyself with crimson, though thou deckest thee with ornaments of gold, though thou enlargest thy eyes with paint, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; thy lovers will despise thee, they will seek thy life.

WOMAN: Thou insultest me, fool!

JEREMIAH: And whom insultest *thou*? Say to your husband, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; neither let the rich man glory in his riches." (*Pause, during which the woman eyes him disdainfully.*) Come, I know thou wouldst hear more, if only to talk of it with thine idle neighbors. So come tomorrow to the gate of the Lord's house, and at this same hour.

WOMAN: Know, my husband is a prince, and he will have thee scourged.

JEREMIAH: Nay, he will not, for their kings and princes are ashamed.

WOMAN (*angrily*): Thou art mad! (*Turns and walks haughtily away.*)

JEREMIAH: She is not fair as Rebekah—her mouth is hard and her eyes are like cats' eyes. My beloved was the fairest among ten thousand—and now—she is a bundle of myrrh unto me. (*Sits musing sadly.*)

*(Enter a priest, right.)*

PRIEST: Jehovah be with thee!

JEREMIAH: Thou also hast need of Jehovah, for from the least even unto the greatest of them every priest is given to wickedness.

PRIEST (*angrily*): Sayest thou this to Jehovah's servant?

JEREMIAH: Yea, thine habitation is in the midst of deceit!

PRIEST: Thou art a liar! Thou talkest like a Gentile.

JEREMIAH: Then will the liar and the Gentile stand tomorrow and speak to the people in the gate of the Lord's house.

PRIEST: We will not suffer it to be so! Jehovah will not suffer his gates to be thus profaned.

JEREMIAH: Then be thou there at this hour on the morrow. I shall be there—and may Jehovah be there! Then let Jehovah judge between me and thee.

PRIEST (*in a high-pitched, angry voice*): Till then, farewell! (*He goes out.*)

(*Jeremiah walks away slowly, deep in meditation.*)

## CURTAIN

## SCENE III

NARRATOR: The next scene takes place on the next day at the gate of the Lord's temple.

SCENE: *At the gate of the temple. Enter two princes, left; husbandman and Baruch, right; others from both sides.*

FIRST PRINCE (*addressing another prince, laughing*): I hear that he sent thee word that thou shouldst not glory in thy riches.

SECOND PRINCE: From what my wife hath told me he is a simple fellow, or perhaps he is drunk with new wine. Let us, however, welcome him as a new and strange thing that may provoke laughter. Do thou mark him well and imitate him tonight at the feast. 'Twill be great sport.

HUSBANDMAN: He talked of wars and desolation. To my thinking he is mad.

BARUCH: Nay, nay, my uncle, he is not mad, but sad and strange. He hath kind, dark eyes, and he spake gently to me.

HUSBANDMAN: Tut, thou art only a lad, and shouldst not speak thy thoughts so freely—but he cometh!

(*Enter Jeremiah. He is dressed in a spotless white robe.*)

THE CROWD (*shouting and jeering*): Ha, mad one! Come and stand in the gate and rave! We would hear the fool's speech!

(*Priest comes out of the temple.*)

PRIEST: Ha! Thou art here! Now get thee gone! Thou shalt not profane the gate of Jehovah!

JEREMIAH: The will of the Lord and not of man be done.

PRIEST: Then go!

SOLDIER (*coming through the crowd*): Nay, old man, he shall stay, for we would hear his words. My sword pleadeth against thee for him—he shall stay!



JEREMIAH: The Lord's will be done. (*He stands in the gate.*)

VOICE IN THE CROWD: Ha! He is mad.

JEREMIAH: Behold, ye scoffers and mockers, this word is for you. The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, "Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth and the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness. And I brought thee into a plentiful country to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when thou enteredst, thou defiledst my land and madest mine heritage an abomination. Yet hast thou forsaken me, saith the Lord. For my people are foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children and none of them has understanding; they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. From the least unto the greatest, every one of them is given to covetousness. The prophets prophesy falsely and the priests bear rule by their means."

VOICE IN THE CROWD: He speaks the truth, friends.

JEREMIAH (*pointing at interrupter*): "And my people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof? Behold, ye trust in lying words that cannot profit, ye steal, murder, commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not. Then ye come and stand before me in this house (*pointing to the temple*) which is called by my name, and ye say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations because we are the chosen people of the Lord.'

"Therefore, hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: Behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law. Behold, I will lay stumbling blocks before this people, and the fathers and the sons together shall fall upon them; the neighbor and his friend shall perish. Behold, a people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth. They are cruel and without mercy, and they come for war against thee, O daughter of Zion."

*(He stops and looks around at the people. There are murmurs from the crowd, and they go away, some to one side, some to the other, looking at each other in fear—all but Baruch. He goes up to Jeremiah.)*

JEREMIAH: Thou art Baruch?



BARUCH: Yea; I did not understand all that thou saidst; but dost thou think we are very wicked?

JEREMIAH: God hath said it.

BARUCH: Because God hath been so good to us, and we have forgotten him and worshipped false gods made of wood and stone?

JEREMIAH: Yea.

BARUCH: If I love God and pray to him, and if I lie not, nor steal, and if I am kind, will he be kind to me too?

JEREMIAH: Yea, then he will be kind to thee and to all who are like thee. (*He speaks as if to an audience.*) For thus saith the Lord: "Return, thou backsliding Israel: Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God—and I will not cause my anger to fall upon thee; for I am merciful." (*Pause. He suddenly remembers Baruch.*) Come, where dost thou live, boy?

(*Baruch points.*)

JEREMIAH: I will take thee home.

(*They go out.*)

## CURTAIN

NARRATOR: About five years after Jeremiah had thus begun his ministry, King Josiah the good reigned. During his rule the Book of the Law that had been lost for many years was found, and he promised that he and his people would obey Jehovah, the only true God; for Jeremiah had told the King these words that Jehovah had spoken, concerning his people Israel: "Since the day that their fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have sent unto them all my servants, the prophets, yet they hearkened not unto me nor inclined their ear, but hardened their necks and did worse than their fathers. Because they have forsaken my law which I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, neither walked therein; but have walked after the imagination of their heart and have worshipped heathen gods; therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Behold, I will scatter my people also among the heathen and I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them. And at that time they shall bring out the bones of the King of Judah, and the bones of his princes, and the bones of the priests out of their graves; and they shall

spread them before the sun and the moon and the host of heaven whom they have served and worshiped; they shall not be gathered nor buried. And all that remain of this evil family shall choose death rather than life," saith the Lord.

And while Josiah reigned, Israel followed the Book of the Law as a lamp unto their feet and a light unto their path.

But twenty-four years later under the reign of the weak King Zedekiah, Jerusalem had gone from bad to worse.

The next act shows two scenes during that time; the first is in Rebekah's home. The characters are Rebekah and Rachel, a friend of Rebekah's youth.

## SCENE I

SCENE: *In Rebekah's house. Rebekah enters, right; sits in a chair and muses. Rachel enters left.*

RACHEL: The Lord bless thee, Rebekah.

REBEKAH: May he be with thee also, Rachel. Ah, Rachel, I am sad. How many things have happened since we were playmates! Night and day do my thoughts dwell on my country. Under our King's rule our people have again turned to wickedness and worship the Egyptians' gods, praying to Isis and Osiris. Oh, for the days of the good King Josiah, when the Book of the Law was discovered.

RACHEL: Peace, Rebekah! King Zedekiah would call thee a traitor. Hast thou heard the fate of Jeremiah, the prophet?

REBEKAH: I did know that he was cast into prison but that the king did deliver him after many days.

RACHEL: Yea, but once more is he in prison. The captains have seized him and let him down into a damp and miry cistern. It is said that his follower, Baruch, pleadeth continuously for him with the king.

REBEKAH: Rachel, Rachel, hath Jehovah forgotten his people, hath he deserted his servant?

RACHEL: Nay, Rebekah, we must trust in him. Day and night let us pray for the deliverance of the prophet Jeremiah. Farewell, Rebekah; I go now, for thou lookest weary. (*Rachel goes out.*)



REBEKAH : In prison yet again—my beloved. He groweth old now, even as I grow old. He was white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. I have set him as a seal on my heart, and our love is strong as death. Jehovah shall recompense us. (*She goes out.*)

## CURTAIN

## SCENE II

NARRATOR : The next scene takes place in the palace of the weak Zedekiah. The characters are the King and his servants, and Baruch, who is now the servant of the prophet Jeremiah.

SCENE : *King Zedekiah's throne room. A fan bearer enters followed by the King who seats himself on the throne. Enter a servant.*

SERVANT (*bowing*) : O King, one waiteth without to talk with thee.

ZEDEKIAH : Who is he?

SERVANT : Baruch, the servant of the prophet Jeremiah.

ZEDEKIAH : Let him not enter ; I would rest today. Ho ! Bring me wine.

SERVANT : All this have I told him yet would he come.

ZEDEKIAH : Tell him then, for I know that for which he cometh, that I will not deliver his master from prison. This Jeremiah telleth things that frighten my people. He shall not be free, but shall stay in the damp and miry cistern into which my captains have thrown him. (*Exit servant.*) Jehovah, lay not this to my charge ! I did not wish it thus, but my princes did desire it. (*Pause.*) Ho, it is hot ; may Isis send us rain ! (*Enter Baruch.*) What, thou fool, comest thou unsummoned into my presence ?

BARUCH : Yea, for the Lord hath told my master in prison that which I now tell thee. Because of thy idolatry and the idolatry of thy neighbors, he that abideth in this city shall die by the sword and by the famine and by the pestilence ; but he that goeth out and falleth to the Chaldeans that shall besiege you, he shall live and his life shall be unto him for a prey. For I have set my face against you for evil and not for good, saith the Lord. The city shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon and he shall burn it with fire.

ZEDEKIAH : Who art thou that thou shouldst go about in a white robe preaching war ? Thou knowest we are safe.

(*Sound of great commotion in the palace. Enter soldiers of the king's guard.*)



SOLDIER: O King, they come! The Chaldeans come! They are even now within the city walls!

*(Zedekiah shows signs of fear; he stands, uncertain what to do. Several attendants enter.)*

BARUCH: My master's words have been fulfilled. I go to him. *(He goes out.)*

ZEDEKIAH *(to attendants)*: To your posts! Defend the palace!  
*(Attendants go out in different directions.)*

## CURTAIN

## EPILOGUE

NARRATOR: The epilogue pictures a group of the people who have not been carried into exile. Among them are the prophet Jeremiah, his servant Baruch, and Rebekah.

SCENE: *The ruins of Jerusalem a few weeks after the preceding scene. It is night. Rebekah and Jeremiah enter.*

REBEKAH: Jeremiah, doth the Lord Jehovah no longer speak to thee?

JEREMIAH: Yea, Rebekah. Why dost thou ask so strange a question?

REBEKAH: Then, why dost thou not point out to our people how Jehovah hath fulfilled his promises of destruction for our disobedience?

JEREMIAH: Ah, the Lord our God is truly great and merciful. I have promised to meet Baruch but a short distance away; do thou come with me while I tell thee of the Lord.

*(They go out. Several people enter from both sides of the stage. Two of the men gather sticks for a fire at center, while others are speaking.)*

FIRST SPEAKER: I tell thee, man *(addressing the man next to him)*, our suffering is greater here on the ruins of the fallen city in this land of desolation, aye, greater than that of our fellows who have gone into a strange land.

SECOND SPEAKER: True, they have gone into a land where even our prophet Jeremiah declared that men may build houses and live in them, plant gardens, and eat the fruit thereof. But the hand of Jehovah is heavy upon us.

THIRD SPEAKER: The arm of Jehovah is shortened; he cannot save. We have nothing left us but our ruined walls and—our anguish.

*(The fire is lighted.)*

ALL: *(Taking up the phrase, repeating it as they sway back and forth in rhythm.)* Our anguish, our anguish.

FOURTH SPEAKER: Listen, my neighbors, we have missed the prophet's message. We do but suffer for our own sins. How repeatedly hath he said to us: Thus saith Jehovah: If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you, to hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I send unto you, even rising up early and sending them, but ye have not hearkened; then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth.

FIFTH SPEAKER: Nay, man, we do but suffer for our fathers' sins. The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth have been set on edge.

SIXTH SPEAKER: Say not thus. Here comes the prophet with the faithful Baruch.

*(Jeremiah, Baruch and Rebekah enter.)*

SEVENTH SPEAKER: Why any longer should we fear him? He can prophesy nothing worse than our present misery.

SEVERAL IN THE GROUP CRY OUT: And thou, O Jehovah, how long?

JEREMIAH: Hear the words of Jehovah, O ye afflicted ones. Why criest thou for thy hurt? Thy pain is incurable; for the greatness of thine iniquity, because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee. Yet I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thy wounds, saith Jehovah. And it shall come to pass that, like as I have watched over them to pluck up and to break down and to overthrow and to destroy and to afflict, so will I watch over them to build and to plant, saith Jehovah. In those days they shall say no more, the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But everyone shall die for his own iniquity; every man that eateth the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge. Behold the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every



man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah; for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more.

EIGHTH SPEAKER: Ah, my neighbors, this promise comes from Jehovah who has revealed through his prophet our present agonies. We must believe that in the heart of Jehovah this new day is for us also.

REBEKAH: For His anger is but for a moment;  
His favor is for a life time.  
Weeping may tarry for the night  
But joy cometh in the morning.

SEVERAL VOICES CRY OUT: Yea, let us sing praises unto our God.

ALL (*chanting*): God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

## CURTAIN

*Alternate ending, in case no front curtain is used:*

*(The people move slowly off, in groups, chanting. Jeremiah, Rebekah, and Baruch come last. The chant may be repeated softly from off stage, dying away gradually in the distance.)*



# THE HERALD OF THE RESTORATION

A Dramatization in Prologue, One Scene and Epilogue

By

Helen Galleher

# THE HERALD OF THE RESTORATION

## PEOPLE OF THE PLAY

SPIRIT OF JUDAH, (a woman).

FIRST HERALD	}	men or women
SECOND HERALD		
THIRD HERALD		
FOURTH HERALD		

NARRATOR, (a man or woman).

THE PROPHET.

THREE COMPANIONS OF THE PROPHET, (men).

MERCHANTS, (3 speaking parts, men).

LEADER OF JEWS, (a man).

OTHER JEWS, (4 speaking parts, men).

MESSENGER, (a man).

## PROLOGUE

*The rising curtain discloses a stage dimly lighted. The Spirit of Judah and four heralds are seen. The Spirit of Judah, clothed in white, is slightly in the foreground. A spotlight picks out her figure.*

*The others are shadowy shapes scarcely more than voices. They may be either men or women and should be dressed in long flowing robes.*

SPIRIT OF JUDAH  
(*Weary and disconsolate*)

Forty-and-eight years ago, the Babylonian host  
Swept down upon my people and upon my city Zion;  
A year and a half they encamped round about her.  
My city was worn by poverty, pestilence, war.  
Jehovah alone could have saved her;  
But she had long since ceased to follow Jehovah's prophets,  
Therefore Jehovah brought against her  
The relentless hosts of Babylon.  
Forty-and-eight years she has suffered in exile;  
Because of her sin she has suffered in exile.

Surely now that sin is thoroughly burned away;  
By the heat of the plains of Babylon thoroughly burned away;  
By toil for the kings of Babylon thoroughly burned away.

FIRST HERALD

“Comfort ye, Comfort ye my people,”  
Saith your God.  
“Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem  
And cry unto her,  
That her warfare is accomplished  
And her iniquity pardoned;  
That she hath received of the Lord’s hand  
Double for all her sins.”

SPIRIT OF JUDAH

Surely the voice of the herald from Jehovah  
Proclaims release for the captive in Babylon, yet what hope is there?  
The conquering nation hems us in on every side  
As sullen mountains, prison-like she hems us in;  
As desert strewn with bones, forbids our crossing.  
And shall one conquer Babylon that we may escape?

SECOND HERALD

Prepare ye in the wilderness  
The way of the Lord,  
Make straight in the desert  
A highway for your God.  
Every valley shall be exalted  
And every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
And the crooked shall be made straight  
And the rough places plain;  
And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
And all flesh shall see it together,  
For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

SPIRIT OF JUDAH

A Messiah hath been promised  
Yet have my people no leader.

THIRD HERALD

Cry!

SPIRIT OF JUDAH  
(*Musingly*)

What shall I cry?  
All flesh is grass  
And all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field.



The grass withereth, the flower fadeth ;  
Because the breath of the Lord bloweth upon it.

THIRD HERALD

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth,  
But the word of our God shall stand forever.

SPIRIT OF JUDAH

(*Meekly*)

Truly the word of our God shall stand forever.

FOURTH HERALD

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion  
Get thee up into the high mountain ;  
O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem  
Lift up your voice with strength.  
Lift it up, be not afraid ;  
Say unto the cities of Judah,  
Behold, your God.  
Behold the Lord God will come as a mighty one,  
And his arm shall rule for him ;  
Behold his reward is with him,  
And his recompense before him.  
He shall feed his flock like a shepherd,  
He shall gather the lambs in his arm ;  
And carry them in his bosom.

*(The heralds slip back into the shadows. The Spirit of Judah stands a moment as though thinking of what she has heard. Then she flings her arms wide in prayer and a smile of hope lights her face.)*

SPIRIT OF JUDAH

(*With face uplifted*)

I believe, O Jehovah,  
That thou hast a purpose for my people,  
And a message to send through them to the nations,  
Therefore hast thou cast us into a furnace heated seven times,  
That our sin might be thoroughly purged away ;  
That all may know from the rising of the sun  
And from the west  
That there is none beside thee ;  
Thou art the Lord  
And there is none else.  
Therefore, O Jehovah,  
Wilt thou deliver us.

CURTAIN

NARRATOR

This scene is laid in a Jewish City within the fortified area of the great city Babylon in the year 538 B. C.

The characters are a group of apostate Jewish merchants who worship as their gods, Fortune and Luck; and the prophet of Jehovah and his companions. Later some loyal but discouraged Jews enter. These form a large part of the Jewish population and are ready to listen to the prophet's message.

THE ACTION

*This scene is laid in a Jewish City within the fortified area of the great city Babylon. It is night.*

*The rising curtain shows an open square. At the center back, before a large idol is a cairn altar. The cairn altar is merely a heap of stones on the top of which is a large flat stone slightly hollowed out in which incense is burning. Lights amber-green.*

*A group of apostate Jewish merchants enter from the left, bearing torches and chanting in monotonous voices.*

MERCHANTS

"O thou great Fortune, look thou upon thy votaries;  
O goddess Luck, now hear our prayers."

*(They bow before the altar and continue bowing as they pray. Prophet and companions enter from right and stand for a moment watching merchants.)*

PROPHET

Hold! Knowest thou not that Jehovah alone, he is God?

*(The merchants appear startled, pause for a moment and then resume their rites.)*

MERCHANTS

"O thou great Fortune, etc.—

PROPHET

Darest thou provoke to further wrath the great Jehovah?

FIRST MERCHANT

*(Sneeringly)*

The great Jehovah!

PROPHET

Aye, the great Jehovah

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand,

And meted out heaven with the span

And comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure

And weighed the mountains—

SECOND MERCHANT

*(Also sneering)*

And forsaketh his chosen ones in exile.

THIRD MERCHANT

Fortune and Luck give us food.

ALL MERCHANTS

"O thou great Fortune, look thou—

PROPHET

*(Interrupting)*

Who created in the beginning the heavens and the earth ;

Behold all nations are as a drop in a bucket,

And are counted as the small dust of the balance ;

Behold he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

Lebanon is not sufficient to burn,

Nor its beast-life for a burnt offering.

All nations are as nothing before Him.

FIRST COMPANION OF PROPHET

Truly they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity.

PROPHET

To whom then will ye liken God?

To that graven image? a workman melted it.

SECOND COMPANION

*(Laughing)*

And the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold.

THIRD COMPANION

And casteth for it silver chains

To fasten it lest it should fall.

FIRST COMPANION

*(To merchants)*

Your god can not deliver your burdens!

Nay, when you would take it from place to place

You put it upon a beast ;

Yea, the thing is a burden for the weary beast.

THIRD COMPANION

*(Proudly)*

But Jehovah God

Hath carried Judah from the womb.

Yea, and he will carry and will deliver her.

*(Merchants doggedly resume their rites. Other Jews enter quietly in small groups or singly and from either side. The number will depend on the amount*



*of stage room there is. Only five speak. For the most part these attend the prophet's word.)*

PROPHET

*(Sternly)*

Have ye not known? Have ye not heard?  
Hath it not been told you from the beginning?  
Have ye not understood,  
From the foundations of the earth?  
It is Jehovah that sitteth above the circle of the earth  
And the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers.  
That stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain,  
And spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.  
That maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.

FIRST COMPANION

To whom canst thou liken him? This? *(pointing to idol.)*  
*(A ripple of laughter among the newcomers)*

THIRD COMPANION

Nay, lift up your eyes on high  
And see who hath created these,  
Who bringeth out their host by number.

SECOND COMPANION

*(Eagerly)*

He calleth them all by name.

THIRD COMPANION

Not one is lacking.

*(Merchants pause unable to answer, but sullen and unconvinced.)*

FIRST JEW

*(In a low tone to one of his neighbors)*

Truly Jehovah is great but he hath utterly cast off his people.

SECOND JEW

*(Sadly)*

Aye, for our sins hath he cast us off.

PROPHET

What sayest thou, my people?

FIRST JEW

*(In a dreary tone)*

My way is hid from the Lord.

THIRD JEW

*(Sadly)*

Utterly hid from the Lord.

SECOND JEW

He can no longer pardon our transgressions.

FIRST MERCHANT

*(Sneeringly)*

The Gods of Babylon have overcome him.

PROPHET

Hast thou not known?

Have ye not heard?

An everlasting God is Jehovah,

He fainteth not neither is weary;

There is no searching of his understanding.

FIRST COMPANION

*(Remembering past experiences)*

I truly know he giveth power to the faint.

SECOND COMPANION

*(Eagerly)*

And to him that hath no might he increaseth strength.

PROPHET

My people, youths shall faint and be weary

And young men may utterly fall;

But they that trust the Lord shall renew their strength.

They shall mount up with wings as eagles;

They shall run and not be weary;

They shall walk and not faint.

*(Merchant seems about to speak when a messenger runs in and stops before the prophet.)*

MESSENGER

The Persian host comes.

Babylon is in an uproar.

Priests are hurrying to and fro to inquire of the gods the outcome.

PROPHET

*(With suppressed scorn)*

What say the gods?

MESSENGER

There is a great hurrying to and fro

To make for themselves new idols.

Be of good courage!

The carpenter encourageth the goldsmith.

When the god is finished

One saith to another,

It is good.

PROPHET  
(*Sternly*)

What say the gods?

MESSENGER

Thou knowest a thing of wood and stone cannot speak.

PROPHET

What sayeth thy god? (*Points to the idol*)

What is the end of today's battle?

(*Merchants hang their heads refusing to answer*)

Thus saith the Lord,

I have raised one up from the north, and he is come;

Cyrus, my servant, is at the door.

(*Messenger goes out*)

JEW

(*Interrupting*)

Cometh not the deliverer from Judah?

PROPHET

He shall come upon rulers as upon mortar.

And proud Babylon also shall he lay in the dust.

Who hath declared this from the beginning that we may know

And before time that we may say he is right?

I first will say unto Zion, "Behold, behold them"

And I will give to Jerusalem good tidings of deliverance

(*To merchants*)

But when I ask of you, can ye answer a word?

(*To people*)

Behold all of them;

Their works are vanity and naught.

Their molten images are wind and confusion.

LEADER OF PATRIOTIC JEWS

Behold, this Cyrus knoweth not Jehovah.

FIRST COMPANION OF PROPHET

(*Eagerly*)

Though he knoweth not Jehovah,

Yet Jehovah hath called him.

PROPHET

(*In a confident tone*)

Jehovah hath created the heavens

And the whole earth



FIRST COMPANION

He hath raised this man up in righteousness  
And he will make straight all his ways.  
Yea, he shall build my city, saith the Lord.

DISCOURAGED JEW  
(*With a show of eagerness*)

And his exiles shall go free?

THIRD COMPANION  
(*Tenderly*)

Yea, all shall go free.

SECOND COMPANION  
Free! Not for price nor for reward, saith the Lord.

LEADER OF JEWS  
(*Doubtful*)

Babylon sits enthroned  
A married wife among her children.  
Shall she be made childless and a widow?

SECOND JEW  
Her gates are gates of brass  
And their fastenings iron.

PROPHET  
Jehovah shall level the gates of brass  
Before his Anointed.

THIRD JEW  
To the north lie great Babylon's armies.  
Shall he overcome them?

PROPHET  
Have ye not heard  
How in old times  
Jehovah called Abraham  
When he was but one  
And made of him a great nation?  
How he led the host of your fathers  
Out of Egypt, and they perished not;  
Only the armies of the Egyptians perished?

FOURTH JEW  
(*Thoughtfully*)

Before splendid shrines  
The Babylonians worship their gods  
Night and day.

PROPHET  
(*Scornfully*)

They worship gods which are no gods.  
Jehovah will surely lead you forth  
And make of you a great nation.  
All the nations of the earth  
Shall see your vindication,  
And they shall come unto you  
And unto your God,  
And be saved.

FIRST MERCHANT

The Babylonian gods are mighty in power.

PROPHET

Babylon is but for a time ;  
She soon passeth away ;  
Thus saith the Lord,  
Lift up your eyes to the heavens  
And look upon the earth beneath ;  
For the heavens shall vanish away like smoke  
And the earth shall wax old like a garment.  
And they that dwell therein  
Shall die in like manner ;  
But my salvation shall be forever  
And my righteousness shall not be abolished.

*(A messenger rushes in shouting)*

MESSENGER

Babylon hath fallen ! hath fallen !

THE APOSTATE JEWS, MERCHANTS  
*(In voices awe-struck and fearful)*

Jehovah alone, he is God !

*(They sink down hiding their faces in shame at  
the foot of their idol.)*

PROPHET

*(Standing superbly erect, face and hands lifted to heaven, vindicated)*  
Jehovah alone, he is God !

*(His companions bow their heads in reverent acquiescence)*

THE JEWS

*(In voices expressing glad acceptance of the dawning of a new day)*  
Jehovah alone, he is God !

*(They drop to their knees bowing reverently in prayer to Jehovah)*

CURTAIN

## EPILOGUE

*The curtain rises disclosing a radiantly hopeful Spirit of Judah*

### SPIRIT OF JUDAH

Oh my people, go hence from Babylon  
For thus saith Jehovah:  
Seek ye the Lord while he may be found,  
Call ye upon him while he is near;  
Let the wicked forsake his ways  
And the unrighteous man his thoughts  
And let him return unto the Lord  
And he will have mercy upon him,  
And to our God for he will abundantly pardon;  
For my thoughts are not your thoughts  
Neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord;  
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
So are my ways higher than your ways  
And my thoughts than your thoughts.  
For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven,  
And returneth not thither but watereth the earth,  
And maketh it bring forth and bud,  
And giveth seed to the sower, and bread to the eater;  
So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth;  
It shall not return to me void.  
But it shall accomplish that which I please  
And it shall prosper in the thing  
Whereto I sent it.  
For ye shall go out with joy,  
And be led forth with peace.  
The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing,  
And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.  
Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree,  
And instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree;  
And it shall be to the Lord for a name,  
For an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

### CURTAIN





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